

# News Release



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
October 28, 2003

CONTACT:  
Roy Stearns  
(916) 654-7538

## **Mt. San Jacinto State Park Closed Due to Extreme Fire Danger, Tram Stays Open**

MT. SAN JACINTO STATE PARK – California State Parks District Superintendent Gary Watts announced today that he has signed a closure order immediately closing Mt. San Jacinto State Park and Wilderness to all public use and entry until further notice, due to the extreme fire conditions now existing throughout much of Southern California.

"We are on highest alert right now," said Superintendent Watts. "At least two state parks in Southern California, Silverwood Lake and Cuyamaca Rancho State Parks, are burning as we speak. That means we must take action to minimize the risk of another fire starting under such extreme and dangerous fire conditions when fire fighting resources are stretched to the maximum limit."

While Mt. San Jacinto State Park will close immediately and until further notice, the Palm Springs Aerial Tramway Station will remain open. The Public can take the tram to the top of the mountain to the visitor's center and viewing areas; however, they will not be allowed to walk down the trails into the park.

Mt. San Jacinto State Park is located in Riverside County, adjacent to the city of Palm Springs. The park is over 13-thousand acres in size and includes the highest summit of the San Jacinto Mountain Range, San Jacinto Peak, at an elevation of 10,834 feet. Within the boundaries are approximately 12,500 acres of State Wilderness, a fragile environmental area requiring special protection and management as one of the oldest wilderness areas within the California State Park System. It is this area primarily, that State Parks wishes to protect during this time of extreme fire danger.

This closure is part of a state of emergency throughout Southern California, caused by burning wildfires. In addition to the closure of the park, the U.S. Forest Service has closed the surrounding San Bernardino National Forest. The length of the closures is unknown at this point and will likely last until the existing fires are extinguished or the extreme fire danger is reduced.

# # #